

The LongPath

A North Alabama DX Club Publication

Special points of interest:

- From the President
- July Program
- June Meeting Minutes
- DX Contests
- N5DF Works 'em All
- A Field Day Story of K4BFT

How to Join

- * Come to a club meeting;
- * or send in an application by mail (form on www.NADXC.org)
- * or call Tom Duncan at (256)705-2147

From the President

By Mark Brown, N4BCD

Since Field Day the radio has rested sideways on my operating desk completely disconnected from the outside world. Sunspots, or precisely the total lack of them and a mental hangover from FD weekend are both slowly abating. Last month I wrote the words "...riding the downhill slope of Cycle 24." No one could have predicted Cycle 24 going over a cliff. As this is written there is ONE sunspot group following about a week with NONE.

Seems the order for the rest of the summer is more social than operational. Huntsville Hamfest is 7 short weeks away. Get your Banquet tickets from Kelley W4VPZ at a meeting or via the website, it's sure to be a great event. Since last month the door prize pot has increased too.

I'm excited also for our NADXC picnic – Saturday, September 10, 10 AM to whenever, at Monte Sano State Park pavilion. It should prove to be a fine time to be outdoors for food, fun, friends, and radio when compared to the just completed sweat-fest of Field Day at the US Space & Rocket Center.

That spool of 24ga enameled copper that was destined to become a radial field for an 80m vertical will need to find a new home. The pine tree (see picture below) that was going to support it went horizontal in a storm a few weeks ago. In hindsight I'm glad it fell BEFORE putting in the radials. The Lincoln County extension agent's verdict: "It was old and is not really a desirable yard tree". The other trees in the photo are too close to power lines.

73,

Mark N4BCD

North Alabama DX Club – President



Summertime Radio Field Operation Adventures

July Program by Craig Behrens, NM4T

Expect to have some "serious" fun as Craig-NM4T presents Summertime Radio Field Operation Adventures.

See many of the underlying technical aspects that must be properly addressed for effective DX'ing field radio Op's revealed.

And, be prepared to gain new ideas as we examine successful radio field activities to leverage "lessons learned" so we can maximize the "fun quotient" in your future field operation activities.

See you at our 7PM, Tuesday, 7/12/16, meeting.



June NADXC Meeting Minutes

By Kelley Vann-Johns, W4VPX, NADXC Secretary/Treasurer

Twenty-one members and three guests were in attendance at the June 14, 2016 meeting at the Golden Corral.

Our quarterly door prize, *More Wire Antenna Classics Volume 2* (ARRL book), was won by Kelley W4VPZ.

Announcements

MD WA4DXP made an announcements about the HARC name badges he is placing a group order for, and about the upcoming 2m Sprint contest. The badges are \$9 each. MD will be placing the order on Monday, June 20; contact him for more information. The 2m Sprint contest will be this Saturday, June 18 for 4 hours in the evening. Rules and frequencies are posted on the harc.net site.

Ron W4VM announced that the feed-line for the DX Club repeater was recently replaced. Paul W4END climbed the tower. Also, the CW identification got sped up, and Ron will work on getting it settled in the programming software. There were some small hardware charges for the Club to reimburse Ron for (\$66.85).

The membership was asked about the VHF Contest that had just occurred over the previous weekend. It was "okay, but conditions were better on Sunday."

Jim N4KH announced that he has achieved 5-Band DXCC! A round of applause followed. Congratulations, Jim!

Mark N4BCD announced that our Hamfest Banquet announcement has gone out to the Birmingham ARC, the Alabama Contest Group, the Tennessee Contest Group, the Mississippi Valley DX and Contest Club, the South East Contest Group, the Southeastern DX Club, and the Florida Contest Group. The notice will also appear in next month's full page QST ad. Kelley W4VPZ announced that there are 76 of 100 tickets available. Hotel reservations for

our speaker will be made this week.

Treasurer's Report

Bank Balance	\$4857.34
PayPal Balance	\$ 257.10
Recent Ticket Sales (in checks and cash)	\$ 342.00
Petty Cash (for making change for tickets)	\$ 100.00
<u>Membership Dues</u>	<u>\$ 15.00</u>
TOTAL	\$ 5561.44

Membership Applications

None

Old Business

None

New Business

QSL Card Show and Tell

Chuck N4NM shared a card from the Jonestown ham radio station. ("Jonestown" was the informal name for the **Peoples Temple Agricultural Project** formed by the [Peoples Temple](#), an [American](#) religious organization under the leadership of [Jim Jones](#), in north-western [Guyana](#). – Wikipedia)

Bob K8KI shared a card from VKOEK, the recent Heard Island DXpedition.

Al W4ABW shared some cards (your secretary missed this information).

Mark N4BCD shared a card from DL1QQ.

MD WA4DXP shared a clever card from NU5DE, a nudist colony in TX, that he received during the AL QSO Party.

Show and Tell, but not a QSL card: Mark N4BCD made a stop by DX Engineering in PA on a recent drive in the area.

ARRL Spectrum Defense Fund

The Club has agreed to match members' donations up to a total of \$100 from our treasury to the ARRL Spectrum Defense Fund. We have had members donate \$70 so far, and will be sending a check to the fund later this year. (Please let Kelley W4VPZ know if you make any donations to this fund.)

Field Day

A big event just got bigger. Kay Taylor, Director of Education at the USSRC will be bringing about 100 Alabama middle school science teachers through our site during the Field Day weekend.

Program

Six club members went to the Dayton Hamvention and there are six stories to tell. Steve AG4W, Bob K8KI, Kevin KG4TEI, Mark N4BCD, Jim N4KH, and John N5DF.



Hams in action at Field Day. The temperature was a mild 99°F.

NADXC Officers and Directors

President	Mark Brown, N4BCD
Vice President	Jim Spikes, N4KH
Secretary/ Treasurer	Kelley Vann-Johns, W4VPZ
At-large	Kevin Hibbs, KG4TEI
Directors	Tom Duncan, KG4CUY

DX Contests for July

By Chuck Lewis, N4NM

DL DX RTTY Contest (Digital), 80 - 10M

July 2, 1100Z to July 3, 1059Z

Exchange: RST & Serial No.

See page 84, July QST and

www.drcg.de

DARC 10 Meter Digital Contest (Digital), 10M

July 3, 1100Z to 1700Z

Exchange: RST plus S.N.

See page 84, July QST and

www.darc.de/referate

IARU HF World Championships (SSB/CW), 160 - 10M

July 9, 1200Z to July 10, 1200Z

Exchange: RS(T) plus ITU zone; IARU HQ stns send HQ abbrev.

See page 84, July QST and <http://www.arrl.org/iaru-hf-championship>

DMC RTTY Contest (RTTY), 80 - 10M

July 16, 1200Z to July 17, 1200Z

Exchange: RST plus S.N.

See page 84, July QST and

www.digital-modes-club.org



"Just Beat It!"

RSGB IOTA Contest (CW/SSB), 80 - 10M

July 30, 1200Z, to July 31, 1200Z

Exchange: RS(T), S. N., & IOTA# if island

See page 84, July QST and

www.rsgbcc.org

European HF Championship (CW/SSB), 160-10M

August 6, 1200Z to 2359Z

Exchange: RS(T) plus year first licensed

See: <http://lea.hamradio.si/~scc/euhf//euhfcrules.htm>

WAE DX Contest, (CW), 80 - 10M

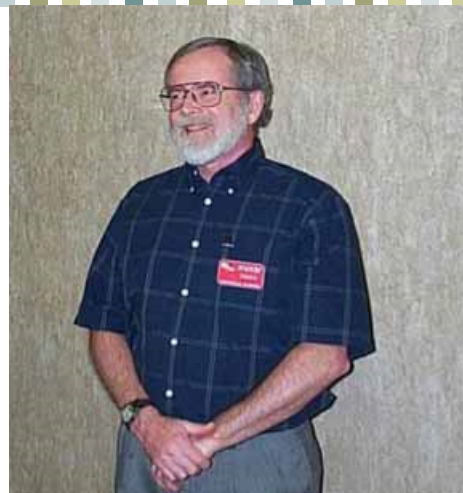
August 13 0000Z, to Aug. 14, 2359Z

Exchange: RS(T) plus Serial #

See: <http://www.darc.de/referate/dx/contest/waedc/en/rules/>



Chris, KF4MMF—Another great year for Field Day Power and Light (and air conditioning!)



OTHERS:

RSGB Low Power Contest,

0900 – 1600, July 17

Run for the Bacon Contest,

0100Z-0300Z, July 18

Dates & times often change or are misprinted in the journals. Beware.

Chuck, N4NM



Mike, K4ADK and the 20m CW rotator

The LongPath Staff

Publisher/Editor:

Tom Duncan, KG4CUY

Departments:

Chuck Lewis, N4NM, DX Contests

Kelley Vann-Johns, W4VPZ, Minutes

Mark Brown, N4BCD, From the President

N5DF Works 'em All

By Mark Brown, N4BCD

One of the perks of working at a technical company full of hams are the periodic visits of other hams. Sometimes they'll need our tools and expertise to replace a surface mount component or simply drop by to have a few QSL cards checked by Steve AG4W, one of our ARRL appointed card checkers.

A notable occasion a few weeks ago - club member John Stensby dropped by with 162 cards to be checked before submitting to the League. This submission, which includes a rare P5 card [see *last month's LongPath* for a close-up—Ed.] will take John from essentially nowhere to DXCC Honor Roll! Of course it didn't happen overnight, it took years with the last cards being the recently activated islands of



South Sandwich, South Georgia, and Heard Islands.



A Field Day Story of K4BFT

By Mark Brown, N4BCD

First of all I want to thank the all the club members who came out and supported K4BFT's annual Field Day event.

PROLOGUE

Being so close to the topic has made this a difficult writing task. Excerpts of this article were published on the HARC reflector and this is the full story.

Sometime in early 2016 I volunteered at a club meeting to be the Field Day Chairman for K4BFT. Having attended 6 out of the last 8 annual events I had a fair idea of what went on and Tom KG4CUY was instrumental in pointing me in the right direction from his past records. I was surprised as the months wore on the amount of time

that would be spent on planning.

PREPARATION

A thorough reading of the FD rules helped identify tasks early. Invitations to media. Those can't go out till they're written. Likewise for invitations to elected officials and served agency personnel. Along the way I started soliciting volunteers for key positions so they could begin assembling their teams. Rick KE4IOH assembled a capable team who got the trailers to and from the arsenal. The station managers from past years again brought their equipment & expertise to the party. Peggy K4EGB volunteered to do our annual FD picnic FOR THE 22ND TIME!

Started a tabbed spreadsheet to track the details & status of tasks and hardware. Hardware was a fluid proposition as the months progressed so I took to maintaining two lists - available resources and committed resources. This may sound mundane but for such a project it was absolutely essential.

In the weeks leading up to FD, the officers invited me to speak at meetings to detail the progress and highlight any shortages. I must say the club members always came through with that extra table, canopy, or tower section.

continued on p. 5

On June 13, just 12 days before FD, an email from Dr Kay Taylor, Director of Education at the US Space and Rocket Center arrived inquiring about the possibility of rotating approximately 100 Alabama middle school science teachers through our site as part of their intense Space Camp curriculum. We exchanged a few emails and then it was time to pick up the phone and brainstorm the details. An email appeal to the League resulted in some helpful tips and an express mailing of extra brochures related to educational outreach.

FRIDAY

Early in the morning Leigh WD4CPF and Tom KG4CUI measured and marked locations for the towers and trailers. Then a steady stream of towers, trailers, trucks, campers, generators, and people arrived throughout the day. Tower sections were bolted together relatively quickly, and then more slowly, top sections and antennas were constructed with feedlines secured against the towers in preparation

for raising. When I wasn't looking a team of people built a city of canopies and tables for a huge picnic.

Overall setup on Friday went very well except for one person getting a little woozy from the heat. I'm thankful we were able to identify the situation early and get him cooled down with no lasting ill effects. The 4 run-station towers were in the air by 7:30 PM - better than usual. We took a lot of water and shade breaks that day.

I was glad to see the newest addition to our line-up take shape - the free VHF/6m station organized by Wayne K4TTZ and Steve KM4CJ. Their station was key in picking up points for the club previously left on the table.



Dr Kay Taylor dropped by mid-afternoon to meet with us and ensure we were ready for her teachers to visit and left impressed at all we'd accomplished so far.

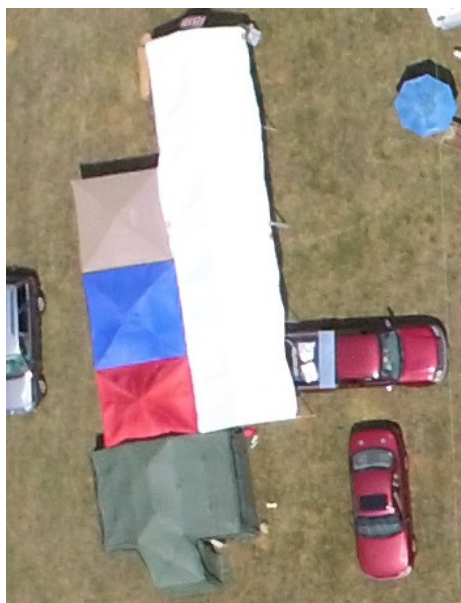
Sometime Friday afternoon I spoke to our new club President Kevin K4IVE to mention it's tradition for that officer to provide evening pizza for the tower raising crew. It was also a good excuse for a late afternoon work break from the heat.

The GOTA station was fully operational by early evening and captured the ARRL Bulletin via PSK. (As the weekend wore on GOTA went on to have a banner year with more participation and more contacts) Well done Todd N7KDT and Stephen KK4TJP.

As darkness approached I found Chris KF4MMF and Ron W4VM working on an electrical fault in one of the rented trailers. Knowing their technical prowess I left them alone to address the issue but couldn't resist a jab. Many will recall the comedy classic movie Airplane! Borrowing from a memorable scene with Leslie Neilson, I opened the door to the trailer they were working in and said "I just want to tell you both good luck. We're all counting on you." Sure enough they found the problem and all was well.



I went off to the hotel as darkness fell and our safety officer Jordan KI4HBO kept watch over the site.

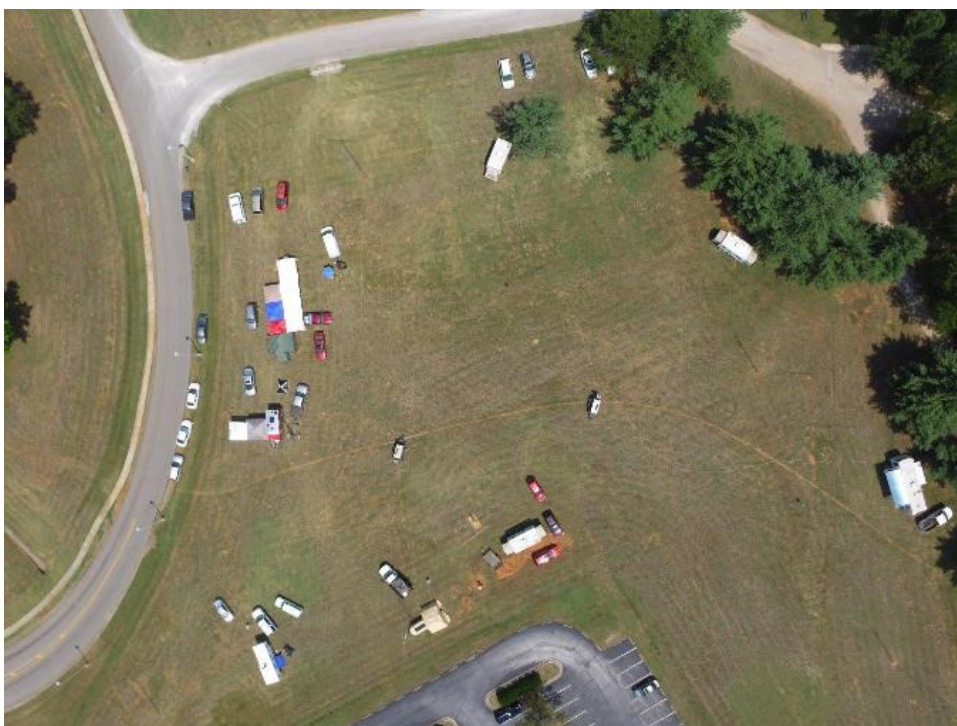


continued on p. 6

SATURDAY

Saturday prep found us with a mechanical failure at the top of the 40/15m phone tower and was rectified by simplifying the antenna plan. A 12:30 PM walk through showed all run stations either on the air or ready to go. I noted there was very little activity between the trailers or picnic canopies – seemed no one wanted to be out in the direct sunlight.

It's a blur but sometime I remember M.D WA4DXP piloting a drone capturing video and photos.



And sometime that morning Dan Oates, Education Program Manager at the US Space & Rocket Center dropped by looking for me to confirm the schedule for the teacher groups. The last group would be coming through at 2:30 PM Sunday afternoon. Problem – there would be no delay in starting tear-down

promptly at 1 PM Sunday. Dan came back later with a revised plan that put the last group on our site at 12:30 PM for an abbreviated 30 minute program.

Saturday's picnic was a huge success. Plenty a food, well attended, and ample canopy space for folks to enjoy their meal and shelter in place from the rain that followed. Thanks Peggy K4EGB!

Our Safety Officer called for a shutdown of operations due to lightning shortly after dinner and likewise the teacher's were restricted

to their building. We were invited to visit them in a large meeting room over at the Rocket Center. Until now the plan for the teachers was a short verbal introduction to what they were going to see and hear followed by tours of the stations. Now the hastily assembled team prepared some note cards to ad-lib a 1 hour presentation. A huge

thanks to Ron W4VM for his demonstration of IRLP so teachers could hear check-ins of callsigns in western states, Bill WB8ELK for his talk on ballooning, plus input from Ann KA4UZI, Kelley W4VPZ, Mike KD7OQC, and I'm surely forgetting someone.

SUNDAY

Was glad for my decision to stay at the Marriott. Awoke early and found both Phone stations struggling with run rates and suggested changes in tactics – search & pounce and investigate the higher bands. By this time it was dawn on the east coast.

I was thankful for the appearance of former HARC President and Madison County EC Rolf Goedhart K4RGG who agreed on short notice to help with the teacher's visit. Turns out one group of teachers had just finished their model rocket launches and joined up with another group so we had 24 teachers instead of 12.

Sunday's tear-down went well but we sure could have used more bodies to spread the workload. A few did heed the plea sent out on the repeater and the extra hands were much appreciated.

Again, thank you to all who participated in making this a wonderful and safe Field Day. The Huntsville Amateur Radio Club fielded a team of professional radio amateurs.

continued on p. 7

A Field Day Story of K4BFT

(cont'd from p. 6)

STATS:

- Number of contacts by station: not published until after the ARRL submission deadline.
- Downtime due to thunderstorms were 52 minutes + 37 minutes = 89 minutes.
- Number of participants / visitors: 60 minimum
- Median age of participants: 59.50 years. (based on a random sample size of 40 reporting)
- Teachers visited at their site on Saturday evening: 27
- Teachers to our FD site on Sunday morning: 24 @ 10:30 AM + 12 more at 12:30 PM.
- Total number of teachers reached: 63.
- Official high temperature: 99 degrees.

[This article reprinted with permission from the July edition of the Huntsville Amateur Radio Club VOX.—Ed.]



Miscellanea

- You can donate to the ARRL from your IRA if you're at least age 70.5. See the back flap of the July edition of the QST for details.
- Huntsville Hamfest needs your help! Go to www.hamfest.org and sign up to help with move in/move out, or contact Warren Alford, KJ4RAW to help with the hospitality suite.